



In all cases care was taken to avoid "over-restoration," that is, making the buildings better than they actually were when first built. For example, rather than using portland cement mortar for filling the cracks between the logs of the cabins, clay and earth were used—as in the originals. Historically, numerous travelers noted cabins in poor repair, with leaky roofs and chinking that had fallen from the logs. The existence of such typical conditions at the Center contributes to the realism of the exhibits.

The continual maintenance required by the use of authentic building techniques is accepted as an aspect of the living museum concept. The adobe roof on the JA Milk and Meat Cooler, a late nineteenth-century structure built in the Panhandle, and the thatched roof on the Picket and Sotol House, an early twentieth-century structure originally located in the arid southwestern section of the state, will require periodic replacement. The work involved in the replacement assures that the

knowledge of these traditional techniques will be perpetuated.

The furnishings of the structures conform to two schemes. In most of the buildings, period furnishings are utilized to depict life during a particular era. However, at the Harrell House, a large dwelling which was expanded room by room over a period of nearly four decades, the building's evolution is represented by furnishings dating from several eras.

Under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, extensive interpretive programs were developed. Consultants with knowledge in areas relating to ranching history were employed to direct researchers. Detailed information was assembled in various fields, including period clothing, historic landscaping, economic history, Spanish and Mexican ranching practices, ethnic history, and early arts and crafts. Using the information located by researchers as well as that previously known, the interpretive

*When the invention of barbed wire and the installation of windmills allowed ranchers to settle more permanently in one place, the ranch-operated blacksmith shop developed. In this photograph, a modern-day smithy practices his art near the Center's blacksmith shop (at left), where an anvil and forge are in frequent use as part of an ongoing demonstration especially popular with younger visitors.*